

PROFILES OF HOPE 2013: RICK SPRINGFIELD
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The Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health's (LACDMH) Public Information Office (PIO) has taped its third and final profile in this year's continuing Emmy Award-winning series, *Profiles of Hope*. This latest profile spotlights singer, actor and writer Rick Springfield at his home in Malibu.

The *Profiles of Hope* series is made up of 10-minute inspirational stories, featuring individuals who share how they overcame stigma and various obstacles to eventually lead them to a road of *Hope, Wellness and Recovery*. This series is being produced, along with the *Free Your Mind Projects Radio Show*, as part of an anti-stigma and social inclusion campaign to create awareness, education and discussion about mental health.

Rick Springfield is well known for 17 hit songs on the Top 40 charts, including his #1 hit *Jessie's Girl* that won him a Grammy for Best Male Rock Vocal in 1981. Over the years, he has sold 25 million albums worldwide. But Springfield is not only a global rock star but also a popular soap star that portrayed Dr. Noah Drake on the ABC daytime show *General Hospital*.

To this day, Springfield continues to tour with nearly 100 live shows every year, and he still makes feature appearances, including on Showtime's *Californication*. As busy as he is, he even managed to pen a *New York Times* best-selling autobiography, published in 2010, entitled *Late, Late at Night: A Memoir*. In the book, he revealed his lifelong depression.



Born in Sydney, Australia, Springfield grew up moving around a lot with his family. Eventually, his family settled in England. "That was a brutal time for me," he said. "Depression kind of set in around fifteen for me. Puberty is when it hit."

Unsure of how to help him, Springfield's mother took him to a therapist. "She thought I was a black sheep and going down the hole," he explained. "It was a good attempt by my mom."

Still feeling despair, he tried to hang himself but it didn't work. "I was just lost and felt completely worthless. The only thing that made me feel better was music and playing guitar," he said. A lucky break came one day when a well-known musician, Pete Watson, asked him to join his band and to play for troops stationed in Vietnam during 1968-1969. He took the opportunity and spent four months there with the troops, playing for them at the fire bases. After too many close gun-fights, he came back home and realized just how traumatic the whole experience was. "I got home and the depression settled in again," Springfield added.

He realized that performing is what helped him cope. "The only peace I get is doing what I love to do," he said. "The depression completely disappears when I get on stage. It disappears." He also recognized that the depression also somehow kept him going. "It's part of my drive... I'm never good enough still, so I keep wanting more and more... pushing myself. It's definitely made me. I'd be a different person if I didn't have depression."



In 1972, he moved to the United States. It wasn't until 1980 when the fame and fortune followed but the depression stuck around. "This is exactly what the doctor ordered – fame and fortune... It (depression) hadn't healed it. It didn't go away."

By 1985/86, Springfield says it got worse. Even with a new house, a newborn son, money and fame, he still couldn't shake the feeling and decided to take a break. "I felt worse than I ever felt. I felt like I didn't have a mission anymore. I became a house-husband and stopped everything. I saw a therapist for five years."

During those years, he raised his two sons and used the time to heal through therapy and spiritual healing. He even took anti-depressants to help him. "I know now the demons that are chasing me. I know why," he explained. "I have more empathy and understanding because of my depression... The self-awareness of depression is a major plus."

He credits his family, including his dogs, for always helping him through the dark days. "My family is the most important thing after my spiritual connection." Nowadays, meditation, working out and hugging his dog help him through the overwhelming and dark times. He has advice for those who may feel down: "Get into something you wanna do... And give it some time. It will change. It won't always be like this."

The *Profiles of Hope* segment and a public service announcement (PSA), both featuring Rick Springfield, are part of a three-part series that will debut by late spring.